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Localising AD scripts from Spanish into Chinese: guidelines for good practices

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1. AD in China at a turning point 1

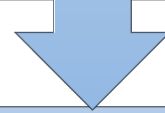
- Officially started in 2009 in Shanghai
- **Volunteer-dependent nature:**
 - Limited mainly to film AD under two primary forms: live sessions or recorded versions
 - Fragmented and diverse landscape
 - No direct legislation requiring AD provision
 - No official guidelines
 - Almost absent in the academia: Training & research
 - Scarcity of qualified audio describers

1. AD in China at a turning point 2

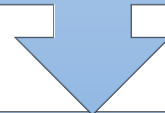
- **Professionalisation and standardisation transition:**
 - To increase the quantity, variety, and quality of AD products while saving considerable time and cost
 - To have AD guidelines based on empirical data
 - To have more qualified AD professionals through systematic AD training
- **AD translation** as a novel and controversial topic in AD studies, especially with under-researched language pairs

2. Our proposal

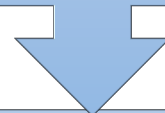
A way to promote AD
quantitatively and qualitatively



AD translation



From Spanish into Chinese



**Guidelines for translating AD from
Spanish into Chinese**

3. Methodology: Triangulation

- Corpus study comparing Chinese and Spanish AD
- Focus group and interviews with Chinese AD key providers
- First set of localization guidelines
- Reception study with Chinese end-users
- Participant observation
- Final set of localization guidelines (in progress)

4. Corpus 1: Design

- 1. Corpus compilation:** A bilingual multimodal corpus formed by eight films with AD in Chinese and Spanish
- 2. Corpus annotation** according to our own labelling scheme with ATLAS.ti: 24 codes on AD content and 7 codes on AD approaches

4. Corpus 2: Results

1. Quantitative analysis:

- Information load: Chinese AD provides more information
- Relevant differences (p value < 0.05) (A Mann-Whitney test, IMB SPSS V. 26):
 - Content selection: proxemics, credits, **paralanguage, psychology, omission of action.**
 - How AD is performed: Explicitness, naming in NVL, subjective comments.

2. Qualitative analysis:

- Subjective comments, explicitness, character fixation, *chengyu*, cultural references.

5. Focus group and interview 1: Design

1. Time: focus group (17/03/2021) and an individual interview (19/03/2021)
2. Place: Shanghai
3. Participants: Six AD key providers from different AD groups
4. Objective: To clarify some most controversial issues in the corpus study
5. Topics: Information load, **subjective comments, and sensitive scenes**

5. Focus group and interview 2: Results

- (1) Information load:** Agreement on offering as much information as possible to users, primarily visual details rather than generic descriptions.
- Anticipation or overlapping between AD and the original soundtrack is adequate when necessary.
 - Suitable silence time: a maximum of 7"
 - Speech speed: 3-6 Chinese characters / second (4" average speed)

5. Focus group and interview 3: Results

(2) Subjective comments: Complete sentences, often using literary devices, to express symbolic, metaphysical, or moral meanings.

- Strictly prohibited
- Permitted when appropriate (i.e., highlights):
 - To help the audience understand the plot considering the education level of the target users.
 - To improve the audience's competence to appreciate films due to the scarce previous exposure to cinema.

5. Focus group and interview 4: Results

(3) Sensitive scenes: Elements about politics, morals, violence, sex, or religion.

- Almost absence of such scenes: Censored before entering the Chinese market.
- AD approaches for the remaining scenes: From indirect descriptions to literal descriptions.

6. Output of the corpus study, the focus group, and interviews

- The first set of localization guidelines for translating AD from Spanish into Chinese

7. Reception study 1: Design

- Three AD versions for the same Spanish film *The Invisible Guest* (Oriol Paulo, 2016):
 - 1 AD script created from scratch; 1 translated; 1 localised based on the first set of guidelines.
- 3 balanced groups for each version
- A questionnaire:
 - Questions about demographic information
 - Questions about comprehension
 - Questions about immersion adapted from the ITC-SOPI (Lessiter et al., 2001)

7. Reception study 2: Conduct of the study

Pilot experiment:

- Time: 20/06/2021
- Place: Shanghai
- Viewing form: on site
- Participants: 28 persons with sight loss (21 valid questionnaires)

7. Reception study 3: AD session



7. Reception study 4: Proper experiment in progress

- Viewing form: virtual, through links shared online by the researcher
- Participants from different cities in China
- If necessary, another round of focus group discussions and interviews with Chinese AD providers and/or users.

8. Four AD scriptwriting norms in China

1. Being loyal to both the film director and the audience with a compromised position between the two in Nord's (1997) terms.
2. Following the hierarchy of AD's functions: the narrative function > the expressive function > the socialisation and education functions.
3. Holding a paternalistic attitude towards users.
4. Favouring a user-centred approach to a certain extent.

8. Localization guidelines 1

1. Method for developing the guidelines: Triangulation of 4 data sources

2. The proper guidelines:

- Content selection
- AD approaches

3. Applications of the guidelines (Pedersen, 2020):

- Instructions for newcomers to the profession
- Reference works for practitioners
- Standards for quality control

8. Localization guidelines 2

4. Potential users of the guidelines:

- **Audiovisual translators with training in AD**
- AD scriptwriters without training in Translation Studies
- Translators without training in AD

9. Concluding remarks 1

1. The professionalisation transition of AD in China calls for its standardization: The need for empirically-based guidelines
2. The existence of many similarities between ADs in the language pair under study can justify the feasibility of AD translation as a new way to create AD scripts in China.
3. The amount of differences makes AD localization advisable.

9. Concluding remarks 2

4. Chinese AD stakeholders are changing their opinions regarding subjectivity.
5. A revision of the first set of localization guidelines will be conducted after the reception study with Chinese end-users.

References

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Disclaimer

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